

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00
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INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
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AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMCONSUL ISTANBUL
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USMISSION USNATO
USCINCEUR
USNMR SHAPE
USOCOSOUTH
CINCUSNAVEUR
CINCUSAFE
CINCUSAREUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 3776

BRUSSELS FOR USEEC

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MORG, TU, GR
SUBJECT: TURKISH AEGEAN EXERCISES

1. THE COMBINED TURKISH AIR-NAVAL EXERCISES WHICH TOOK PLACE IN
THE AEGEAN NEAR THE GREEK ISLAND OF LESVOS MAY 6 SPARKED SOME
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ALARM IN THE GREEK MEDIA BUT APPARENTLY DID NOT AROUSE UNDUE
CONCERN WITHIN OFFICIAL CIRCLES. THE ARMY ATTACHE, WHO WAS ON
LESVOS AT THE TIME AND FROM SHORE WITNESSED PARTS OF THE TURKISH
EXERCISES, DID NOT OBSERVE ANY EXTRAORDINARY MEASURES ON THE
ISLAND WHICH WOULD INDICATE AN ALERT AMONG THE GREEK FORCES THERE.
NEITHER HAVE OUR MILITARY CONTACTS IN ATHENS SHOWN ANY UNUSUAL
IRRITATION AT THE TURKISH EXERCISES.

2. DEFENSE MINISTER AVEROFF COMMENTED PUBLICLY THAT THE GOG HAD BEEN INFORMED BEFOREHAND AND THAT THE GOG "CANNOT ATTACH A PARTICULAR IMPORTANCE TO THE EXERCISES." HOWEVER, A GOG SPOKESMAN NOTED SEPARATELY THAT THE EXERCISES WERE DISTURBING BECAUSE EVEN THOUGH THEY TOOK PLACE IN INTERNATIONAL WATERS, IN ACTUAL FACT LESVOS WAS "SURROUNDED".

3. OPPOSITION LEADER PAPANDREOU USED THE OCCASION TO ATTACK PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS ONCE AGAIN FOR HIS POLICIES TOWARD TURKEY, INCLUDING THE RECENT SUMMIT MEETING WITH TURKISH PRIME MINISTER ECEVIT. THE EXERCISES, SAID PAPANDREOU, SHOWED "WHERE MONTREUX IS LEADING US" AND WARNED AGAINST FURTHER SUMMITS.

4. SOME SECTORS OF THE PRESS GAVE PROMINENT COVERAGE TO THE EXERCISES, CALLING THEM "PROVOCATIVE" AND "PRESSURE" BY TURKEY AGAINST THE GREEK ISLANDS. THE PRESS ALSO REPORTED THAT A MINOR VIOLATION OF THE GREEK TERRITORIAL SEA TOOK PLACE DURING THE EXERCISES.

5. COMMENT: WE HAVE NOT DETECTED MUCH CONCERN AMONG GREEK OFFICIALS OVER THIS PARTICULAR EXERCISE. HOWEVER, A SHARP INCREASE IN THE FREQUENCY OF SUCH EXERCISES WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY PROMPT THE GREEKS TO RESPOND IN KIND, POSSIBLY LEADING TO A RETURN OF THE TENSE ATMOSPHERE WHICH PREVAILED IN THE AEGEAN AREA DURING THE SUMMER OF 1976.

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MCCLOSKEY

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